

Overview

This standard is about the community development practitioner's role in supporting people and groups to come together to identify common issues, set aims and objectives and achieve their common goals. Most community groups, at some point, face the issue of attracting and retaining new members; and the challenge of recognising that they need to find new ways of involving a wider range of people. The standard involves working across settled, new and marginalised communities, acknowledging different skills sets and approaches that need to be employed in an inclusive community development practice.

This standard is relevant to all community development practitioners who support communities in this process.

The community development standards are arranged in six key areas:

1. Understand and practise community development
2. Understand and engage with communities
3. Group work and collective action
4. Collaboration and cross-sectoral working
5. Community learning for social change
6. Governance and organisational development

This standard is within Key Area One.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. work with individuals and groups to raise awareness of issues that may affect their community
2. work in inclusive ways across diverse and marginalised communities
3. support groups to develop the skills and confidence to involve marginalised communities
4. engage people concerned about their community in activities and groups
5. develop activities to identify the potential for collective action
6. support people to participate fully and equally in activities and groups
7. evaluate existing resources to meet expressed community priorities
8. support groups to agree aims, tasks, and organisational structures for collective action
9. support groups to overcome barriers to achieving their aims
10. build on the strengths, skills and expertise of group members through a range of collective learning approaches
11. suggest recruitment methods to meet identified gaps in skills and representation
12. support groups to cope with the turnover in active members caused by external factors

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how to engage with all sections of communities
2. the impact of power and power relationships upon individuals and communities taking collective action
3. the benefits of recognising and valuing diversity
4. how structural factors impact on different sections of the community
5. ways to overcome barriers to involvement
6. the importance of groups deciding on their own development
7. the role of research and information to determine common concerns
8. techniques and approaches for the collective identification of common issues, aims, tasks, needs and capacity
9. how to work inclusively across marginalised and mainstream groups
10. how to facilitate collective approaches to working with groups
11. how to use the values of community development within groups
12. the impact of transient and changing populations on groups
13. working with groups to create transparency and accountability
14. support needed for the roles that people take in groups

Values

Community development is underpinned by a set of values which distinguish it from other, sometimes related, activities in the community. These values are at the core of community development and underpin each of the standards. The values are:

1. Social justice and equality
2. Anti-discrimination
3. Community empowerment
4. Collective action
5. Working and learning together

The following examples illustrate how each of the community development values might inform practice in this standard. These statements are not part of assessment requirements.

1. individuals from different backgrounds are actively welcomed and encouraged to take part
2. steps are taken to ensure people from different backgrounds and with different needs can fully participate in community activities
3. individuals apply the confidence and skills gained from participating in groups to take on new roles
4. creative and new ideas for bringing people together are encouraged
5. groups participate in networks with other groups and provide peer support for each other

Glossary

Accountability

Involves being responsible within and to communities for the actions taken and decisions made; and the opportunities for members of communities to hold to account representatives, decision-makers, groups and individuals working on behalf of communities

Collective action

Working together with others to achieve a common aim.

Community

The web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that can develop among those who share a geographic area or identity or interest.

Community development practitioner

A person doing community development work as a paid worker, unpaid worker, group member, community activist or volunteer.

Community Engagement

A way to build and sustain relationships within and between communities, community groups or organisations, public sector, third sector and other agencies. It provides a foundation for collaboration helping them to understand and collectively take action.

Community groups and organisations

Support inclusive and collective working

Located within communities of geography, identity or interest. These groups are controlled by their users and are usually small and informal with no paid staff. They are often referred to collectively as the community sector.

Empowerment

A process where people gain control (eg confidence, knowledge, skills, resources) to affect decisions impacting on their communities.

Learning

Can be informal, formal and non-formal:

- Informal refers to experiential and personal learning
- Formal learning refers to what we gain from courses, academic studies and continual professional development
- Non-formal education is that which can be informal or formal but occurs in non-traditional settings e.g. in communities.

Organisation

Any collection of people in the community, voluntary, public and private sectors and any hybrid configuration across these sectors. It refers to community groups, charities, community and social enterprises, statutory agencies, businesses.

Resources

This covers any physical or human resource that supports the community development process and could include technical equipment, IT-based resources, buildings, sources of specialist knowledge, local assets

Structural factors

Powerful social processes that impact on people's lives, even before birth, and include: cultural, economic, ecological, social, political and demographic factors that manifest at community, national, international levels; and which are often inter-connected to affect the poorest and most vulnerable in society.

Support

The work a community development practitioner may undertake to ensure the group can pursue its aims. The types of activities may include: providing information, moral and motivational encouragement, researching particular topics, identifying sources of help, listening to group members' ideas and thought processes and reflecting them back, facilitating decision-making, acting as an advocate, coach, mentor, critical friend.

Technology

This refers to both hardware and online tools/apps which can be used in practice and communication (including social media).

Support inclusive and collective working

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